

Successful IWGO meeting in Chicago

Following a long standing tradition, 104 scientists from 15 countries met in Chicago, U.S.A. to attend the 25th Conference of the International Working Group of *Ostrinia* and other maize pests (IWGO) from Sunday 13 to Thursday 17 April 2014. IWGO is a global working group of the International Organisation of Biological Control (IOBC). Participation was observed from North America, Europe, Asia, South America and Africa but with higher than usual attendance of scientists from the United States. For the first time, Dr Ulrich Kuhlmann, Convenor of IWGO, could welcome participants from Argentina, Brazil, South Africa, South Korea and Laos, clearly demonstrating the still high and even growing global interest in this IWGO Conference and the scientific programme. The 25th IWGO Conference was linked again with the 4th International Conference on *Diabrotica* Genetics, and as pointed out by Dr Tom Sappington, Co-Convenor of IWGO and local organiser, was notably unique in being jointly held for the first time together with the North Central Corn Entomologist Technical Committees (NCCC46 and NC205). This allowed United States maize experts to exchange information with international scientists working on insect pests of maize of reciprocal concern to the U.S.A., Europe and elsewhere. An impressive number of 60 professional oral presentations were given during the 12 scientific sessions, resulting in a packed but exciting programme. Remarkably, even the very late talks stimulated substantial and lively discussions, indicating not only the high quality of the talks but also that the conference spans an interesting, not too wide, scientific area of common concern. Furthermore, 21 posters presented additional new information on the conference subjects. These posters were visited and discussed extensively, facilitated by their close proximity to the well-equipped coffee break area. Last but not least, the final day of the conference was used to exchange information in a more flexible way, focusing on ideas for future directions and coordination of rapidly expanding ‘-omics’ research on *Ostrinia* and *Diabrotica*, as well as the latest information regarding the biological and economic risks and benefits of neonicotinoid seed treatments used in maize.

Even after long days, conference participants activated energy reserves to explore a bit of downtown Chicago and particularly to join the IWGO “Take Me Out to the Ballgame” night, a major league baseball match between the Chicago White Sox and the Boston Red Sox! For many of the Non-Americans this was the first baseball match seen live and was highly appreciated, at least when ignoring the freezing temperatures. An IWGO entomologist even caught a home run ball while enjoying a beverage behind the right-field fence!

The well-organized conference was clearly successful in exchanging the newest information on innovative management of maize pests, both above and below ground; of particular interest was to see progress in science and developing products against the Western Corn Rootworm where resistance against *Bt*-traits is of increasing concern. There is no doubt the joint meeting facilitated opportunities to foster new collaborative projects between scientists who are using a variety of different approaches to tackle similar problems.



Conference hall in the Allerton Hotel, Chicago (photo: Tom Sappington, USDA-ARS)



Kelton Welch, Geoffrey Jaffuel, Mario Schumann, Christina Mogren and Mike Bredson (from left to right) received the IOBC Global Travel Fund. Not pictured: Darija Lemic and Jennifer Maxwell who also benefited from the IOBC Global Travel Fund (photo: KCS, Delémont)